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EDITORIAL

THE LONG AGENDA

It would be pleasant to think that the unorthodox views of *The Nation* in the past had become the orthodoxies of the present and that, in effect, this journal had been both prescient and widely persuasive. We would claim, in this issue that celebrates the mind, character and accomplishments of Carey McWilliams, only that many (certainly not all) of the causes espoused in these pages have been adopted as national policy or, at least, are high on the agenda of its progressive citizens.

McWilliams, who edited this magazine, for twenty years, would be the last to make ambitious claims for the results of his own work or even of that of the many distinguished contributors who wrote under his guidance. But he might be among the first to affirm the importance of the journal of opinion in this electronic age.

When such weekly giants as *Collier's*, the old *Life* and *Look* were crashing, *The Nation* under McWilliams was demonstrating that survival was not merely possible but imperative. Here, cold-war "liberalism" got its first hard scrutiny; here the sacrosanct FBI and CIA were first dissected, and the militarization of U.S. foreign policy was first subjected to an examination—by Fred J. Cook, as he recalls in this issue.

It is appropriate that, having "retired" from weekly journalism, Carey McWilliams has honored us with his biweekly column, "Second Thoughts."

The agenda for radical liberalism is long and still growing. The task of McWilliams's successors is clear, though the ways to accomplish it will puzzle them as much as they often troubled him. But they can draw courage and inspiration from his efforts and his example. And to this effort, in honoring Carey McWilliams, we dedicate ourselves.

THE McWILLIAMS YEARS

Essays, Reviews, Memoirs by Contributors Who, for the Most Part, Wrote for and Worked with

CAREY McWILLIAMS in the Period 1956 to 1976

Fred J. Cook
Robert Hatch
Susan Jacoby
Christopher Lasch
Mary Ellen Leary
Norman Redlich
Robert Sherrill

REASON IN THE COLD WAR

McCARTHY'S GLOBAL HOAX

NORMAN REDLICH

The Jewish sages displayed prophetic wisdom when, at least 2,000 years ago, they commanded future generations to celebrate the Exodus from Egypt by retelling that miraculous story each year and treating the deliverance from slavery as if it had been experienced personally by each descendant. This annual repetition sustains the sense of involvement that Jews feel in events which might otherwise have faded into a forgotten past. During the 1950s, civil liberties in the United States were dangerously imperiled by an irrational anti-Communist hysteria that permeated all aspects of American life. The American people gradually emerged from that dark period, although the individual victims, and many of our institutions, were permanently scarred. It is important that the story of this shameful period be constantly retold lest we forget how easily our most precious liberties can be lost, as they nearly were. And in the telling of that story a special place of honor must be reserved for Carey McWilliams and *The Nation*.

The era associated with Joseph McCarthy actually began to develop in the late 1940s, several years before the Wisconsin Senator's famous West Virginia speech in February 1950. Nor was this period America's first manifestation of political repression aimed at the perceived threat of subversion from the Left. In the past it had been directed at labor organizers and small groups of anarchists, Socialists and Communists. But with the exception of the Espionage Act prosecutions during World War I and the Palmer raids after the war, such attempts at political repression had been conducted primarily at the state level. They had taken

(Continued on Page 610)

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LETTERS.

DOING TIME IN TEXAS

San Antonio, Texas

Bruce Jackson's article ["Texas Prisons Go on Trial," *The Nation*, Oct. 28] was certainly not in the tradition of your usual penetrating beneath-the-surface probing.... It was, in fact... superficial. Its bias toward the Texas Department of Corrections was unmistakable. *Corrections Magazine* (March 1978) dealt with Texas prisons in a much more meaningful way.

The TDC officials continually boast of the system's efficiency and security, and this boast is probably justified. But what is also true of the system, and what has been documented, is that the system represents, in effect, a modern system of slavery. The director of Oklahoma's prison system (identified in the *Corrections Magazine* article only as Pontesso) stated: "One gets a strong feeling that TDC exists not for the protection of society . . . not to rehabilitate criminals, but to perpetuate the plantation as the largest agribusiness in the state." And the director of another state system, also quoted in the article, said: "They've got such a powerful PR apparatus that it's hard to demythologize the system. Texas is a kind of anachronism.... In perhaps five years the correctional community is going to realize that they're actually backward, that there is a better way [than field labor] to do things....

And John Coleman, president of The Edna McConnell Clark Foundation, after spending two weeks as a Texas prison guard, summed up his impression of the system in these words: "It's the quiet and respectfulness of men who are completely cowed. In those weeks I found out that I didn't like what they were doing. It's such a completely dehumanizing process they're involved in."

I think your readers are entitled to a more balanced view than we got from Jackson.... *Joseph Di Giacomo*

Buffalo, N.Y.

Colonel Di Giacomo misreads my article; it was an appraisal of the issues I think were raised in the *Ruiz* case, not an evaluation of the Texas Department of Corrections....

If one has one's mind made up, one can easily find quotations to support one's preconception. The *Corrections Magazine* article the Colonel cites included extensive statements by correctional administrators *praising* TDC, but he doesn't quote them at all. I should mention that Fred T. Wilkinson, Arnold Pontesso's former supervisor in the Federal Bureau of Prisons, prepared a detailed consultant's report for the Texas Attorney General that contradicted in almost all regards the report Mr. Pontesso was hired to write for the plaintiffs. I have great respect for Ken Schoen and what he has been trying to do in Minnesota, but I don't think the real philosophical differences about prison administration reflected in his statement quoted in *Corrections* can be resolved by making Texas the bad guys and unnamed other states the good guys .... John Coleman's distaste for life at Ellis prison farm is shared by almost everyone I know, but the Colonel should have informed your readers that Coleman's remarks were specifically about the prison for the inmates TDS thinks most violent, most likely to attempt escape, most in need of protection, and those with the most consistent records of hurting other inmates.

None of which is to suggest I think Texas prisons fine places to be. I don't. I've said previously—in *The Nation* and in other publications—that *all* prisons are horrible places.... Every prison stands as a complex monument to the failure of every American institution that precedes it: family, schools, churches, whatever....

TDC isn't the prison system I would run if I had a chance to design a prison system, but it is closer than the prison systems that have given us Attica, Joliet and San Quentin. If I had a choice—I would divert a large portion of those billions of dollars spent every year on law enforcement and corrections and military hardware and start pouring it into the poisoned urban communities that produce so many of the prisons' inhabitants. Instead of killing those programs when they don't produce spectacular results in two or three years (as happened with the Poverty Program), I would give them a reasonable time in which to work. I think it crazy that we have legislatures that think twenty or thirty years in prison will rehabilitate a felon but cannot decide it takes an equal amount of time to rehabilitate an entire city.

That isn't going to happen in this country, at least not for a very long time, and in the interim all we can do is attack the institutions that fail and support the institutions that work. *Ruiz* has nothing to do with the ontological legitimacy of Texas prisons; it asks only whether or not Texas prisons are managing decently the people who have for one reason or another been exiled from society.

I'm holding my final judgment on TDC until I've had an opportunity to consider *all* the evidence in *Ruiz*, and I would like to think that Judge William Wayne Justice is doing the same thing. Colonel Di Giacomo is free to ignore half the facts in this case if he so desires; journalists and judges—fortunately—do not enjoy such freedom. *Bruce Jackson*

COMPLEXITIES OF BELFAST

Oakland, Calif.

One of these days progressive opinion in the United States is going to wake up to the fact that the morality and politics of what has been happening in Belfast and Londonderry and the rest of Northern Ireland is a damn sight more complex than expatriates living in New York like to think. I am of course referring to your article by Jack Holland in *The Nation* of October 28 ["Bloodshed and the 'Bobby' Myth"].

To understand Northern Ireland requires a broader conception of history, British and Irish, and a far greater amount of sensitivity to the genuine case of both the hard-line Protestants and the thousands of ordinary Ulstermen and women numbed by mindless terrorism than shown by your contributor. He gives the game away in his last sentence. First look at the dreadful figures of murder and mutilation in the Province in the past eight years, then examine closely "the cycle of army and police repression, IRA *resistance* and Protestant terrorist *reaction*" (my italics).

This knee-jerk association of the Provisional IRA with all that is good, clean and progressive in the affairs of Ireland is actually one of the very reasons why political negotiation over the future of Ulster is stalled. Blame the British Government, the government of Eire, the hard-line Protestants as well, but unless you ascribe a good chunk of the responsibility for the death of politics in Ulster to the rifle-toting terrorists of the Provisional IRA, you are interested only in partisanship, not in understanding or political and social change.

David Walker

Brooklyn, N.Y.

Mr. Walker must realize by now that in the United States more than "a good chunk" of responsibility has already been ascribed to the IRA for the bloodshed in Northern Ireland. I was merely trying to point out that the policies pursued by the British in Northern Ireland—who are not an army of Alistair Cookes, as the American press seems to think—have contributed in no small measure to the current crisis. I had hoped that my article would have lifted the debate about Northern Ireland above the level of slogans—of which "mindless terrorism" is a good example. *Jack Holland*

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EDITORIALS.

American Radical — Western Style

This apologia is adapted from the closing pages of The Education of Carey McWilliams, *to be published next spring by Simon & Schuster.*

In the 1920s I was a rebel; in the 1930s I became and have remained an unreconstructed, unapologetic radical. But Western radicalism is not like its Eastern counterpart in all respects. In the East, leftists of all persuasions are preoccupied with the theoretical correctness of their positions. In the West, radicals concentrate on issues. In California, I got used to being called a variety of names: fellow traveler, Socialist, Communist, soft-headed liberal. I was a fellow traveler in the sense that I sponsored some committees that took positions I thought important, even though I did not always agree with the politics of the other sponsors. Some of these committees were no doubt Communist-inspired or contained names of Communist Party members on their letterheads; but at the time no other groups were raising these issues and I have never thought it necessary or practical to screen associates when taking a political position on a specific issue of immediate importance. In a sense I have been a socialist for many years but I have never known a Socialist party or movement with which I could identify; I have had differences with all of them. And I have never been a member of the Communist Party although I have known individual Communists I respected and whose courage I admired. But had I been accused of being a radical (Western style), I would readily have pleaded guilty.

I am unable, however, to offer a pat definition of an American radical. The radical tradition, in Michael Harrington's phrase, is "part of the secret history of the United States." By which he means that there has never been a well-organized coherent identifiable radical movement that has persisted over any considerable period of time in the same place. The impulse has been intermittent but persistent and stronger in the West than elsewhere. At different times in their lives, individuals have voiced radical sentiments only to disavow them at a later date; Tom Watson, the Georgia

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demagogue, might be cited as a case in point. And there have been a few—a very few—demagogues who ended up being radicals. One could find, I am sure, individual Socialists, Communists, Trotskyists, Republicans (a few), Democrats and Independents who could fairly be called radicals. But radicals have always been a minority within the minority of the Left. Unlike liberals, they never feel part of the existing order and are invariably critical of it.

Hannah Arendt once wrote that the radical is engaged in the unbiased search for those facts in everyday affairs that contain the roots for future development. She defined radical in the sense of "going back and reviving much that belongs to the very roots of the American radical tradition as well as much that belongs to the radical tradition everywhere—the tradition of naysaying and independence, of cheerful 'negativism' when confronted with the temptation of *Realpolitik*, and of self-confidence: pride and trust in one's own judgment." The radical is the perpetual outsider, the odd man (or woman) out, constantly critical of the power structure and of things as they are.

But I am also a socialist in the sense that I share the socialist critique of capitalism. However, this critique does not tell us all that we need to know about socialism, precisely what it would do and how it would do it. And socialism in practice, while varied and feasible, has shown limitations that have disappointed its most enthusiastic advocates. It is easy to talk about "democratic socialism" but just how would an American Socialist regime safeguard civil liberties? How could it prevent a slavish dependence on state power? How would it go about changing the structure of economic power? Could it avoid bureaucratic sloth? Would it be able to breathe new life into the constitutional concept of government of, by, and for the people?

Despite these and other unanswered questions, the socialist perspective does make it possible to see that the growth of corporate power constitutes a threat to democracy since it focuses attention on capitalist imperatives of profits and expansion. Apologists prate about "corporate responsibility" and the rise of a new managerial class sensitive to public needs, but the concentration of economic power can no longer, if it ever could, be adequately controlled by regulatory measures and Executive directives. For one thing, the political power of the people has become increasingly atomized with the rise of media politics. True, the people continue to elect officials, but the power remains in the board rooms.

By my idiosyncratic reckoning, I have known five "worlds": the one I grew up in on a cattle ranch in northwestern Colorado; the world of the 1920s I explored as an "expatriate" in Los Angeles; the surging world of the 1930s, which was even more exciting in California than elsewhere; the world of the War Years with the promises of a peace that never came, and the thirty-year cold war that coincided with my years at *The Nation*.

Over these decades I have come to believe that radicals should be primarily concerned with values. If they could achieve substantial agreement on the kinds of values society should encourage, it might then be possible to proceed experimentally, tentatively, to invent new forms and institutional arrangements which would best safeguard and extend those values. Values, in a word, should take precedence over programs. Then the risks of the remedy becoming part of the problem could be minimized. That is what Henry Adams had in mind when he said of Theodore Roosevelt's trust-busting activities that the problem was "not so much to control the trusts as to create the society that could manage the trusts." But since agreement on values is unlikely and the task of altering the structures of power so formidable, the role of the radical as goad, critic, and dissenter will be needed for a long time; in fact I cannot conceive of a society in which this function could safely be dispensed with. In the 1840s, Dostoevsky believed in radicalism, basic Christian values, and the autonomy of art. My loyalties, after a rough, informal "education" in five "worlds" of politics and experience, are to radicalism, socialism (a more rational economy with a more equal distribution of power and responsibility and a more sensible use of resources), democratic principles, the kind of "Christian" humanism F.O. Matthiessen emphasized, and the autonomy of art, ideas and values.

What it comes down to is that I am the rebel-radical I have always been and that I still take a generous view of the future and remain basically an optimist despite much evidence that I could be wrong. As a journalist I have learned to take all ideological projections with a grain of salt. What my "education" has given me, in brief, is some understanding of the realities of the different "worlds" I have known and what it has meant to be part of the action. The past I do not purport to understand, the future I cannot fathom. But I have managed to escape the blight of boredom by exploring these five "worlds" and noting how they affected me.

CAREY MCWILLIAMS

A Quiet Man—With Scissors

I worked with Carey McWilliams for more than twenty years, but I can't say when he got to the office. Unless he had an appointment uptown, he'd be there when I arrived (and I protest I kept responsible hours), with his jacket off and wearing an old gray sweater, and more times than not standing at a table in the corridor, attacking with a pair of 12-inch scissors the pile of newspapers and magazines that came in every day from cities and towns across the country. It was a job he never delegated—how could he? It was how he not only kept tabs on a score of follies and frenzies which he knew would in time be ripe for picking but also spotted new chimeras at their moment of hatching. He had a file on the Hiss case when the Woodstock typewriter was still a gleam in Richard Nixon's eye.

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It was that file which provided Fred Cook, who writes in this issue about working with McWilliams, the basic material for the first special issue he wrote for *The Nation*. The year was 1957. Alger Hiss had been convicted in 1950 and had completed his jail sentence in 1954, but his trial still haunted the conscience of America—as indeed it still haunts that conscience today—and McWilliams thought the time had come to publish a clear, orderly account of the Hiss trials, so that our readers could grasp what it was about this affair that so bothered them. But the record, not all by inadvertence, was anything but clear and orderly; what sort of writer, then, was best equipped to untangle it? A good crime reporter on a metropolitan daily, he decided, was the person he wanted, and of these the best one he knew was Fred Cook, then on the New York *World-Telegram and Sun*.

When they got together, McWilliams asked Cook what he knew of the case. Nothing, Cook said, except a vague feeling that Hiss was probably guilty. Without commenting on that, McWilliams shoved the bulging folder across the desk and asked Cook to take it along. A week or so later, Cook was back in the office with fire in his eyes, and the story was on its way. It is not true, by the way, that crime reporters wear their hats on the back of their heads and grin at Justice as though she were a tart. The good ones are in love with her and spend their professional lives rescuing her from the toils of prejudice, greed and ignorance—not to say the law. Fred Cook, as stated, is one of the best and after the Hiss Case he wrote for Carey McWilliams major articles on The Warfare State, the CIA, The Corrupt Society, Gambling, the FBI and the Shame of New York—all of them, one way or another, in defense of Justice.

The swains of justice, as you might expect, had a way of showing up in McWilliams's office, many of them wearing a somewhat transparent air of truculence as a defense against being thought idealists. It is impossible to mention all whom I met there, and to name a few might be thought invidious. But Robert Sherrill, who came out of Texas by way of Florida, found a like mind in Carey McWilliams, who came out of Steamboat Springs, Colo., by way of California and, for *The Nation*, exposed more shell games and pricked more bubble reputations than any other single contributor during the period of which I speak.

McWilliams clipped for all of us. If you went to him with an editorial idea you thought no one else had noticed, he'd hand you anything from three to a dozen clips and invite you to go to it. Omniscience is not easy to accept in a close associate, but he made it seem so easy that there was no reproach in it. And the sense of being uncannily well informed was pleasant, if vicarious.

In an abrasive profession, McWilliams has always been a tactful man, though with him it takes a puckish form. When he handed you a manuscript for editing, he'd tell you in three or four sentences what it contained. Odd, you'd think until you got on to him, he must know I'm about to read the thing. But then, when you did, you'd find that his statement had described the piece he wanted, which was not exactly the piece in your hand. It was his way of telling you how to do your job. It was how I learned mine. Not that it always worked; sometimes, the piece he wanted just wasn't to be had in the piece submitted, and you'd have to tell him so. Back it would go, then, and he'd cast his lines for a better treatment of the subject.

The strength of Carey McWilliams, as an editor and a man, is that he is utterly without illusions but has never let himself become disillusioned. No folly surprises him and no evil puts him out of countenance. You might think, if you did not know him well, that experience had hardened him, but it is not so. What is so is that he conserves himself by becoming progressively more quiet as he grows progressively more indignant. Over the years I worked with him Carey was quiet much of the time, for reasons that you can read in the volumes of *The Nation* he edited. He is a man who believes in human decency—naturally enough; he has fought all his life to preserve it. ROBERT HATCH

ARTICLES.

The Gravity Of Good Sense

ROBERT SHERRILL

The editor of a magazine like *The Nation* is supposed to have courage. I mean, according to the rules of folklore all journalistic underdogs are supposed to be great scrappers in the face of great odds. I'm happy to say that Carey McWilliams has never done anything to make me think of him in that way. Perhaps I am simply ignorant of the true Carey; if so, I am very happy in my ignorance. However, to go along with folklore, I will offer one or perhaps one and a half anecdotes that could be used to illustrate Courageous Carey.

The first goes like this: When Kennedy was assassinated in Dallas, there was a lot of hard feeling toward H.L. Hunt, the Dallas billionaire, because he and his radio program, *Life Line*, had been pumping out hate stuff aimed at Kennedy, and some people felt that the Hunt material just might have triggered the killing. Anyway, it made Hunt a fit topic for a magazine piece and I got the assignment to do one on him for *Harper's*. With some luck I got the first interview Hunt had given anyone for seven years and he almost talked my leg off (something he subsequently did with any newsman who came close enough for him to tackle); and, because a lawsuit was about to break, I got hold of a lot of internal memos and correspondence between Hunt and *Life Line*'s officials. That sort of thing.

It was a good piece and, needless to say, not a friendly piece. When it came back from the editors at *Harper's* there was scribbling in the margin, about every third line, "Hunt is sure to sue on this," or some similar prediction of trouble. Hunt was considered a

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Art Wood, 1978

bit mad and there was no telling what he would do. Quieting *Harper's* fears, I saw, would be impossible.

So I sent the piece off to *The Nation*. I had never dealt with the magazine before. Carey ran it at once, as was, without asking that I modify anything. And this despite the fact that *The Nation* had just gone through a very costly libel suit. They had won it, yes, but outsiders may not realize what even a successful legal fight means to a magazine with a budget like *The Nation*'s. For Carey to take on another touchy piece so soon, from a writer who was then a stranger to him, and run the risk of another libel suit took stamina if not courage.

My half anecdote comes dated several years later, when I did a piece for *The Nation* to show that Wright Patman, the old Populist Congressman from Texas, was not nearly as sweet and pure as he pretended to be. Patman threatened to sue, claiming malice on my part. He didn't but he certainly pounded Carey with a great deal of heavy mail and telephone artillery. Through it all, Carey did not bat an eyelash, nor did he retreat so much as the length of a toe.

Several reporters who have handled more inflammable material for *The Nation*, reporters such as Fred Cook, could probably give many better examples of Carey's coolness under that kind of fire.

But I am just as glad that I don't know any others because I think there is an element of distortion in such stories. My guess is that more often than not Carey had to respond as he did in 1967, when he and I stumbled on material that made it quite plain that a former Cabinet member had received a $1 million bribe to perform certain actions on behalf of the oil industry. The trouble was the guy had left government, was running a big corporation, and we no longer had the clear-cut protection of the Sullivan decision on libel. So, on the advice of his lawyers, Carey decided not to run the piece.

Five years later, *The Washington Post* got hold of the same material and gave it a front-page splash, but, unfortunately, wrote it in such a muddy way that nobody could tell a bribe was involved.

In any event, the *Post*, with its multimillion-dollar earnings and its five-team legal protection, can print that kind of stuff without running much risk. The Establishment is not going to allow one of its voices to be seriously hurt in a legal battle. Despite the flimflam bickering that goes on between the likes of Chief Justice Warren Burger and the likes of publisher Katherine Graham, they are working the same side of the street and they know it, and they are going to stop far short of critically damaging each other. For outfits such as *The Nation*, the situation is different. The Establishment would love to see them blown away by lawsuit or other act of God. So the greatest service Carey did for *The Nation* on the occasion of the $1 million bribe story and probably on many other occasions was to swallow the taste for a scoop.

To tell the truth, that side of his editing doesn't really interest me much. I think editors who do something because it is the courageous thing to do are as boring as, and certainly more troublesome than, editors who err on the side of caution. Good editors go as far as they can sensibly go, and no further.

The only test of high merit for an editor is whether he has the power—a matter of character as much as mind—to create an ordered universe in which his writers can putter around with the feeling that what they are doing is worth doing and in which his readers can feel that, presumably, there is still a chance to escape from chaos and old night.

Anyone who has written much for Carey—and

In the Struggle for Equal Rights . . .

Carey McWilliams

and

Harriet Pilpel

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anyone who has read *The Nation* much since the 1950s—knows that he has done just that. Because he is a stubborn Orangeman, the results are perhaps more in the style of Ptolemy than Copernicus, but in any event he has created his own wonderful, ordered universe of social necessities, social evils, political demonology, etc. It is a universe held together by the gravity of good sense and fairness and decency, words that I would be embarrassed to use except that when you apply them to McWilliams they are as cold as science.

There is another kind of orderliness that Carey offers of enormous value to writers. He has personally participated in so much of what has gone on in this country over the past several decades that when those of us who drift around from one topic to another, seldom tying anything together, get lost, we know we can always go back to Carey and get straightened out on how one trend relates to another of long ago, or how a particular political clown emerged from some forgotten political circus. And if we have assignments in other parts of the country, we can be sure that Carey can pluck half a dozen names from his enormous friendship network to help us out when we arrive. It has been my experience as a reporter that a friend of Carey never lets you down.

You will notice that I have praised Carey The Editor only for things that made my work pleasanter and easier. I have no abstract reasons for appreciating him, only selfish reasons, and there are hundreds of other writers who feel the same. We do not think of him as a revered institution. We think of him as a brief telephone conversation or a three-sentence letter (seldom more) giving us an assignment that once again brought us into a context that made sense. □

'Unmeltable' Immigrants

SUSAN JACOBY

When I was in sixth grade, my class presented a pageant for parents' night titled *E Pluribus Unum.* One girl wore an authentic tarantella costume from Italy. An unlucky boy, presumably representing an immigrant from an Alp, was forced to don a cap with a feather. I wore a dress covered with bilious shamrocks—the nuns' idea of festive apparel on an Irish potato farm. After each of us had made an initial appearance in the garb of the Old Country, we ducked behind a curtain and emerged in identical red, white and blue costumes: the personification of the Melting Pot.

There were no images of immigrants with brown or yellow skins to mar the pretty picture of assimilation. Nor was there any indication of the schizophrenia that has always characterized American attitudes toward immigration: on the one hand, the lady with the torch welcoming huddled masses; on the other, the xenophobia, racial prejudice and economic discrimination that have awaited large influxes of newcomers.

As usual, Carey McWilliams was far ahead of his time in recognizing the continuing nature of America's ambivalence toward its position as a "nation of immigrants." His most important works on immigration were published between 1939 and the end of World War II—a period when Americans gave little thought to what in retrospect appears to be an obvious conflict between the war against fascism abroad and discrimination against ethnic and racial minorities at home.

On the eve of the war, American immigration policies were governed by a highly restrictive system of "national origins quotas," enacted into law in 1924 by a Congress that was determined to halt the heavy immigration of Jews, Slavs and Italians. It is no exaggeration but a straightforward historical fact that a great many European Jews went to their deaths in the Nazi gas chambers because the quota system did not allow them to enter this country during the late 1930s.

Long before the channels for European immigration were blocked, the entry of Chinese into the United States was ended by a series of laws based unabashedly on race. In 1943, President Roosevelt made a generous gesture to our wartime allies by signing a bill to repeal the exclusion acts and allow 105 Chinese a year to enter the country. At that time, McWilliams observed in *Brothers Under the Skin* (Little, Brown), "our 'immigration problem,' as such, was associated almost exclusively with the movement across the Atlantic. It became associated in our minds with Ellis Island, the Statue of Liberty and the doctrine of the Melting Pot. Conversely, the movement across the Pacific was associated with an entirely different set of symbols. We came to associate it with the Yellow Peril, the 'Chinese Must Go,' and Japanese Picture Brides."

During the war, McWilliams was one of the few writers with the courage and the perception to examine the relationship between the history of legally sanctioned anti-Oriental discrimination and the evacuation and internment of Japanese-Americans on the West Coast. His studies of the treatment of both Chinese and Japanese immigrants in the West—and the complicity of other sections of the country in that treatment—offer classic illustrations of the relationship between special laws governing "aliens," discrimination against Native American minorities and threats to the civil liberties of all American citizens. This relationship is better understood today than it was twenty-five years ago, but the lessons of the past have been only partially absorbed by government officials who make immigration policy (and by the public).

Who, apart from a small group of scholars, realizes that the harsh anti-Chinese laws passed by Congress in the late 19th century were the result of a bargain between anti-Oriental legislators from the West and white Southerners who wanted to wipe out the vestiges of Reconstruction? As McWilliams pointed out in his research on Chinese immigration, the bargain between West Coast and Deep South Congressmen was

Susan Jacoby, a free-lance writer, is completing a book on recent immigrants to the United States.

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Vadillo, Siempre (Mexico)

clearly demonstrated in post-1876 votes on all issues involving Chinese and blacks. "No longer interested in Chinese labor," he noted, "the South was quite willing to join with the Pacific Coast in fitting the Chinese into a caste system which, in many respects, closely resembled that which prevailed throughout the former slave belt." That caste system was buttressed by a wide variety of laws, including those denying immigrant Chinese the right to become naturalized citizens and subjecting all Chinese to the threat of deportation unless they obtained special residence certificates.

It is not surprising that a section of the country, which had succeeded in writing its prejudices against Asian immigrants into national law, should bring the full weight of that prejudice to bear in wartime not only against first-generation Japanese immigrants but against their American-born children. In *Brothers Under the Skin*, there is an obvious relationship between a chapter on "The Long-Suffering Chinese" and another dealing with "Our Japanese Hostages."

McWilliams's full examination of the history of Japanese immigrants to the United States and the treatment of Japanese-Americans during the war is contained in *Prejudice: Japanese-Americans, Symbol of Racial Intolerance*. The importance of this book, published by Little, Brown in 1944, does not lie solely in the fact that it was one of the lonely voices raised against the Japanese internment while the war was still in progress. Today, the episode is generally regarded as an aberration in American history—a shameful aberration, to be sure, but one which can be understood in terms of wartime shock and hysteria. McWilliams, however, correctly explained the evacuation of West Coast Japanese in terms not only of wartime psychology but of the complex economic and cultural history of Japanese immigration during the preceding fifty years.

One piece of "evidence" supporting fears of Japanese sabotage, for example, centered on some Japanese immigrants who had established farms on the Palos Verdes heights near Los Angeles—hills from which signals might be flashed to Japanese ships at sea. After a long description of the role of immigrant Japanese in California's agricultural economy, McWilliams concluded: "Certainly this location was most suspicious. Later it emerged that the reason the Japanese farmed on the Palos Verdes hills was because the land was high and free from frost, and because they needed one area near Los Angeles for dry-land farming so that early tomatoes and peas and beans might be placed on the tables of Los Angeles consumers."

The dark side of America's attitudes toward immigrants who could not blend into the white majority is perhaps best summed up in a report on the Japanese evacuation by Gen. J.L. DeWitt, the military commander for the West Coast. "The Japanese race is an enemy race," DeWitt wrote, "and while many second and third generation Japanese born on United States soil, possessed of United States citizenship, have become 'Americanized,' the racial strain is undiluted . . . ." It therefore follows that along the vital Pacific Coast over 112,000 potential enemies of Japanese extraction are at loose today."

As recently as 1965, McWilliams's studies of Japanese and Chinese immigration might have been regarded as works of somewhat esoteric interest. That year, President Lyndon Johnson signed an immigration reform bill that finally abolished the old system of quotas by national origin. During the past ten years, the new immigration law has brought about a vast increase in the Asian population of large cities, with most of the immigrants coming from Hong Kong, Taiwan, Korea and the Philippines. The population of New York's Chinatown, for example, has quintupled since 1968—from about 30,000 to an estimated 150,000.

Until I began my own research for a book on the new immigrants, I had not realized what a profound influence the Japanese internment had on all Asian-Americans. In Chinatown, even the most staunch anti-Communists expressed pleasure when President Nixon made his first trip to mainland China. Why, I asked stupidly, were so many anti-Communists pleased at the prospect of improved relations between the United States and Mao Tse-tung's China? "All Chinese-Americans, whatever their political beliefs, are frightened by the thought of a war between America and China," explained one conservative business-

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man. "We are afraid we would lose our property and be sent to camps the way the Japanese were. Did anyone think of them as real Americans?"

This same businessman, whose second-generation Chinese immigrant family had fled to New York in the 1890s to escape persecution in California, told me to read Carey McWilliams's history of the Japanese. "There weren't very many white Americans who were concerned about the internment," he observed, "and the Asians were too scared to speak out."

McWilliams's unusual combination of a civil libertarian's perspective with an economic analysis of immigration questions was applied not only to Asians but to the single largest group of "unmeltable" immigrants—Mexicans. He deals with the general history of Hispanic immigration in *North from Mexico: The Spanish-Speaking People of the United States* (1949). A number of economic issues that have had a particularly significant impact on Mexicans are discussed in two books on migrant farm labor—*Factories in the Field: The Story of Migratory Farm Labor in California* (1939) and *Ill Fares the Land: Migrants and Migratory Labor in the United States* (1942).

In the late 1930s and '40s, Mexicans were regarded not as immigrants from abroad but as a readily available, mobile source of cheap agricultural labor, moving back and forth across the border at their own will and at the pleasure of their employers. (Mass deportations did occur from time to time, but these were considered temporary measures in response to specific economic conditions.) The current national concern over illegal immigration from Mexico has grown in direct proportion to the movement of Mexicans from transient agricultural labor to regular industrial jobs in Western and Northern cities.

Ill Fares the Land offers some observations about policies regarding migrant agricultural workers that could as easily be applied to some of the measures designed to discourage illegal immigration today. American communities have always tried to devise special "settlement laws" to discourage migrant workers from settling down and becoming eligible for public services.

Such laws, McWilliams pointed out, have never really worked—they have only driven migrants from one place to another. "Settlement laws," he wrote, "attempt to Balkanize the nation; to divide it up into a number of migrant-proof communities."

One of the most appealing and enduring qualities of Carey McWilliams's work on immigration is his repeated demonstration that discriminatory laws against "unmeltable" groups of immigrants are not only bad on constitutional grounds; they are bad economically and they simply don't work. One can only hope that some official in the Carter administration will pick up an old book by McWilliams before the government goes ahead with its plans to issue special work permits for selected groups of illegal immigrants or, worse yet, to build an extra-sharp wire wall to keep out the hordes of border-crossers in El Paso and San Diego. This isn't the sort of fence that makes good neighbors. □

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'Juggernaut: The Warfare State'

FRED J. COOK

Congress has just blessed the military establishment with a Pharaoh's ransom—an appropriation of $116.3 *billion*, a sum calculated to keep our generals and admirals and all the lesser cogs in their establishments in the life style to which they have become accustomed. There has been some minor media shock about the enormity of this largess, but no real criticism, no outrage. It has become a national habit to greet colossal military appropriations with ennui. This despite disclosures about assassination plots and experiments with LSD on unsuspecting victims. This despite the needless horror and tragedy of Vietnam. Despite everything, what the military wants the military usually gets—even to the tune of $116.3 billion.

The American public, lulled by the indifference of the media and the propaganda of an Establishment rooted in the military-industrial complex, has become conditioned to accept as inevitable a system that has involved us in international disgrace and a succession of disasters inspired by militaristic adventurism.

It need not have been so. Seventeen years ago, in the fall of 1961, I wrote and Carey McWilliams published in *The Nation* a full-issue article with the provocative title: "Juggernaut: The Warfare State." The central theme was simply this: that the military-industrial complex had become so all-powerful that the prosperity of the nation had become dependent on it, and that the interests so intertwined had developed the power to determine national policy and affect the nation's destiny without regard to the will of the people.

Vietnam—the war we want to forget—was soon to prove the validity of that thesis. It was the inevitable disaster produced by the mind set of power that sought to impose a military solution on political crises 9,000 miles away. And it left us with a generation torn apart; with 56,000 young Americans crucified on the cross of power, and more than 300,000 others horribly wounded, thousands of them maimed for life.

In light of these events, it is perhaps of some interest to describe the birth of the article that forecast the inevitability of this and other doomsdays unless our new Prussian-type militarism could be harnessed and made subservient to the best interests of the people.

Carey McWilliams, the greatest editor for whom I ever worked, was considering ideas in the summer of 1961 for a fall issue of *The Nation* to be devoted to a single subject. He and I met to discuss several possible projects, but none seemed important enough to justify such special treatment.

We were at this impasse when I broke off to have lunch with a millionaire who was both a large stockholder in IBM and a man with publishing interests. He was late arriving, and when he hurried to our table, he blurted out: "You know, I think there are people in this country who want a third world war. And you know something else? I think they are going to get it!"

A collective shudder ran around the table at which a couple of his aides and I were seated. We began our business discussion, and I never learned what had put my host in such a lather. But his explosive remark had for me a special significance.

My son, who was then at the Graduate School of Rutgers University in New Brunswick, N.J., had told me about an informal poll taken by the students in one of his classes. The question was: "Do you think the world will exist ten years from now?"

Almost without exception, the students had agreed that it was unlikely the world could avoid a nuclear holocaust for an entire decade. "Of course," Fred had said to me, "they may not be as totally convinced as they seem. After all, we are pretty stable persons, college graduates taking extra courses to improve our future, and what would be the sense of doing that if we were really convinced the world wouldn't be here? The only thing that would make any sense then would be to go out and raise all the hell we could in the time left us. None of us are doing that, but still almost all of us seem to think the chances of survival are pretty slim. That's what we say anyway."

I was thinking of this conversation and the startling prediction of my host as I started back to *The Nation*'s office. And I remember I stopped in the middle of the sidewalk, lightning-struck by an idea. I felt that hair-prickling sensation a reporter has when he senses that he is onto something special. "This is it!" I said to myself, and I hurried back to see Carey McWilliams.

Carey was sitting at his ever cluttered desk when I burst in upon him. When I explained my idea, he said in that quiet, soft-spoken way of his: "Great. Let's do it." Then, without a pause for thought, added:

"And I know just how to pitch it. You begin with Ike's Farewell Address in which he warned about the dangers of the military-industrial complex, and you take off from there. Not much attention has been paid to Ike's address, but the old General has been there himself and he knows what it is all about."

President Eisenhower's farewell warning to the American people had, indeed, attracted relatively little attention. In some circles, it had been scoffed at. One noted liberal columnist in New York had even ridiculed the departing President for presuming to put himself in a class with George Washington by making

Fred Cook is a journalist and author whose latest work, Storm Before Dawn, *is a Revolutionary War historical novel (Condor Press).*

NATION EDITORIAL

Dangerous vested interests have been created in our $39 billion defense budget. To be free from these pressures, American policy-makers should devise alternative means by which this country's vast productive machine can be fully utilized. It may not make much difference to the company that holds a defense contract—or to its stockholders or employees—whether the plant is used to produce milk-storage tanks or shells. But it makes a great deal of difference to the rest of us. —*June 30, 1956*

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NATION EDITORIAL

According to Edwin Lahey, well-known Washington correspondent, "the Air Force . . . has a lobby stronger than pig iron. The jaunty generals from the wild blue yonder have more Senators and Congressmen in their pockets than the Anti-Saloon League ever had at the peak of its power." The reason is clear. Appropriations granted the air force necessarily benefit the aircraft industry; it is, in effect, the industry's lobby.

It is the existence of this lobby, the most powerful but least advertised in Washington, that raises a question more serious than whether the industry's profits are excessive. For it may be that we are spending more for this type of defense than a realistic, disinterested appraisal of the risks would indicate. —*August 11, 1956*

a farewell address to the people.

But Carey McWilliams, though he considered Eisenhower no genius as a President, still thought the nation owed him a debt of gratitude for avoiding a whole series of pitfalls and disasters. And so Carey appreciated, as many commentators had not, the validity of Eisenhower's warning about the growth of a military-industrial complex which wielded such tremendous power that it had become, in effect, a threat to the democratic society it was originally intended to protect.

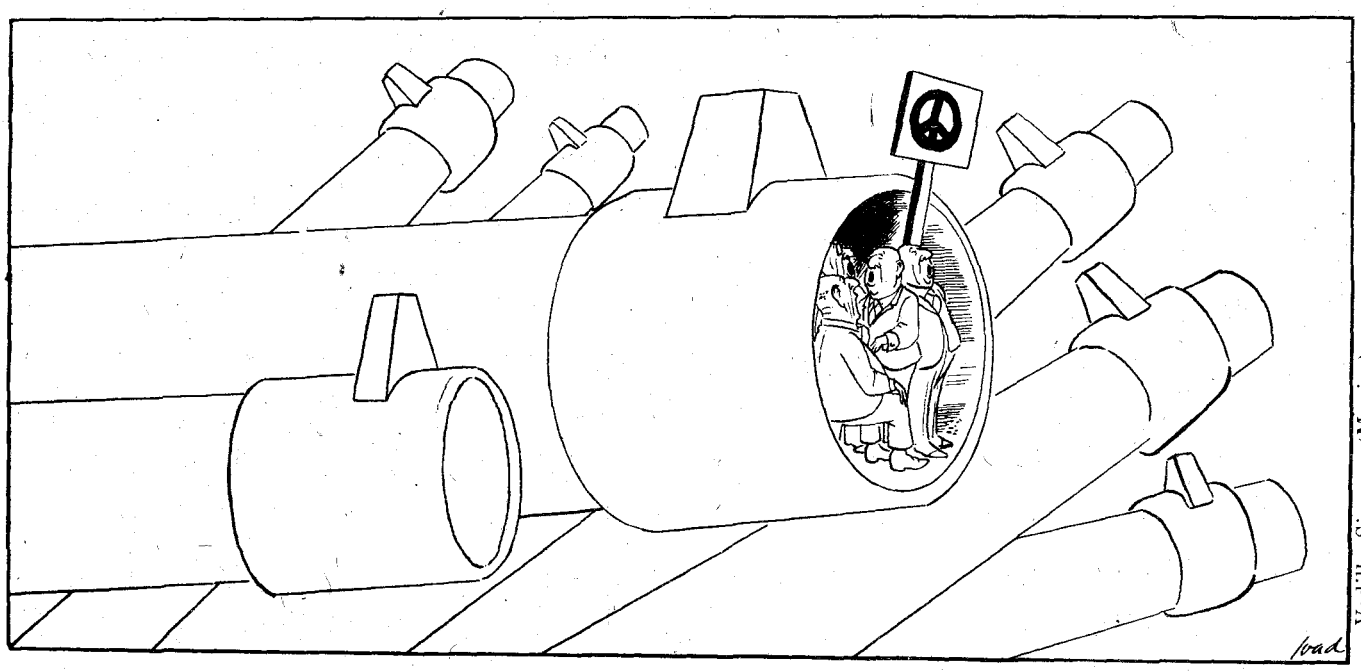
Once Carey and I had decided on the subject and the approach, he plunged into his private gold mine. This was a carton full of clippings, culled from every source imaginable and sorted by topic. He pulled out a fat folder dealing with the military. Though he hadn't known about the subject matter of our fall issue until that moment, Carey was prepared. No squirrel ever hoarded more precious nuggets for future use than did Carey McWilliams.

He baffled me. I could never understand how he could possibly accomplish so much. He was a one-man editorial staff, thinking up ideas, telephoning authorities in a multitude of fields, assigning writers, reading manuscripts to get out every week a journal of opinion that was always interesting and often challenging. It was a herculean task in itself, but in addition Carey was always reading, clipping, filing—compiling stacks of background material on issues that might not seem important at the moment but could become so one day in the future.

With the background material Carey supplied me, I went to work. After weeks of research and writing, I produced a 60,000-word manuscript to which Carey gave the final, inimitable touches. The idea for the title—the title that pulled the whole article together and gave it its special focus—was his. Other writers had made vague references to a "garrison state," a phrase that gave the impression of a frontier fort surrounded by hostile Indians. Carey's "Juggernaut: The Warfare State" reversed the emphasis and conveyed the far more accurate and terrifying idea of an unchecked militarism.

To understand just how challenging the concept of "Juggernaut" was, it is necessary to step back and take a look at the times. Those were the days when Nelson Rockefeller was plunging into the business of building bomb shelters. *Life*, with illustrations, was describing just how comfortably one could survive a nuclear holocaust in one's own well-stocked, well-protected bomb shelter. The earth above might be seared until its crust was as barren as the moon, but *Life*'s message was: worry not; prepare to live happily in your nice, cozy bomb shelter. Herman Kahn, Henry Kissinger and others were playing the statistics game in which human beings became chalk marks on a blackboard—marks that bore no resemblance to tortured human flesh. They were assuring us that nuclear war was "bearable." Some 50 million or 75 million might die (estimates varied), but "we" would survive.

It was, in other words, an era of top-level irrationality in which only those who could look with equanimity upon the possibility of such catastrophic human casualties were considered real statesmen. They were the "realists," the "hardheaded" pragmatists; and anyone who suggested their thinking was insane was labeled a softheaded idealist and possibly unpatriotic.



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NATION EDITORIAL

It is by no means surprising but nevertheless worth noting that the Senators who are the strongest advocates of increased appropriations for military aircraft represent states with burgeoning aircraft industries.

—*September 22, 1956*

When "Juggernaut: The Warfare State" appeared in this public atmosphere, it created a rumble in intellectual circles and produced a sequel. As with many of Carey McWilliams's projects, *The Nation* article led to a book, *The Warfare State*, which was published by Macmillan in September 1962, just a few weeks before the Cuban missile crisis.

The book, which expanded on *The Nation* article, had a foreword by the late Bertrand Russell, who called it "one of the most important and also one of the most terrifying documents I have ever read." Despite this praise from one of the world's acknowledged geniuses, the reaction was sometimes hostile, sometimes ludicrous.

The Scripps-Howard News Service sent one of its top reporters to Gettysburg to interview Eisenhower for an article timed to appear on the book's publication date. The hope, it would appear, was that Ike would tear the book apart, but he did no such thing. Instead, he actually parroted *The Nation* title by telling his interviewer that the military-industrial complex was "like a juggernaut running down the road out of control." The New York *World-Telegram and Sun*, which featured this interview, made no mention, of course, of the book or the magazine article that had inspired it; and one has to conclude that many readers must have wondered what the fuss was all about.

Look magazine had Fletcher Knebel write an article on the subject. It was, as I recall, one of those on-the-one-hand, but on-the-other-hand pieces that shed little enlightenment. Vague reference was made to the fact that some persons (unidentified) were referring to "the warfare state."

I cite these examples mainly to show the one-sided, blinkered, hostile atmosphere in which Carey McWilliams functioned so courageously and with such foresight during the 1950s and 1960s. He was light years ahead of so many of our esteemed leaders whose names made headlines. Take, for example, the paragraph near the close of *The Warfare State*, forecasting the debacle of Vietnam:

> There is a limit to our money, to the burdens the American taxpayer can be expected to bear, to the drain on our gold resources and our manpower. If we engage in many Koreas, if we are dragged into another "limited war" in Southeast Asia, we shall bleed ourselves of our finest youth and our future leadership in a blind endeavor to halt and contain by force an ideology we detest. The battle, if it is fought in these terms, can only succeed in bleeding us white in endless "police actions."

That paragraph, written in the first week of April 1962, forecast the disaster of Vietnam and its insidious drain on our economic system. It was written at a time when President Kennedy was studying the recommendations that Gen. Maxwell Taylor and Walt Rostow had brought back from their fact-finding mission to Vietnam. Yes, they recognized, there was a political problem with the unpopular Diem regime, but General Taylor thought the infusion of 10,000 American Marines would solve the issue.

Neither Carey McWilliams nor I had access to such highly privileged information, but, if we had had, we would have recognized it for the dangerous nonsense that it was. Our common sense—and, really, common sense was all that was needed—would have told us that the nation was embarking on a mindless course that could lead only to the crowning obscenity of our times.

Carey and *The Nation* throughout the years that followed the publication of "Juggernaut: The Warfare State" kept trying to turn a searchlight of reason upon the Establishment's obsession with "the light at the end of the tunnel"—a military victory in Vietnam. Notable in that continuing effort was the article written by Howard Zinn and published in *The Nation* on February 6, 1967. Its title capsuled its message: "Vietnam: The Logic of Withdrawal."

It would take eight more years and tens of thousands of unnecessary casualties before the power-prone, militarily obsessed masters of national policy would be forced to yield to the simple, common-sense logic that had forecast the inevitable. □

California & The Two Browns

MARY ELLEN LEARY

It was like coming upon a familiar though unloved and cantankerous acquaintance in a crowded marketplace of a foreign city. In so alien a throng, a warmth of recognition surges up, even though distaste may be rekindled. That was the sensation, just after the November election keyed overwhelmingly to promises of governmental cost cuts, on coming across a news report describing a new burst of outrage from the California Farm Bureau Federation and the Western Growers Association. They had discovered that federal grants of more than $1 million have gone to support English-language instruction, farm skills and apprenticeship courses for members of Cesar Chavez's United Farm Workers.

"It's like taking our own tax money to support our enemies," blustered Les Hubbard, spokesman for the Western Growers Association, according to the press report. Forthright, blunt, the words reasserted old battle lines: "the enemy"—that's how Western farm workers continue to be perceived by Western farm owners, nearly four decades after Carey McWilliams published *Factories in the Field*.

In a year which so sharply delineates the end of a po-

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litical generation, a year which closes the book, or so it seems, on the era when "liberals" used that label proudly to assert concern for human welfare, the news report, evoking an old conflict that used to be of prime importance to liberals, gave a reassuring sense of continuity. Here was evidence that government was serving a need of the poorest paid and poorest equipped workers in the state, a need recognized and wrangled over for forty years or more. If "liberals" are gone, they have left a mark. For how long may be the question.

There was no wrangling over farm labor and Cesar Chavez in the recent gubernatorial election campaign in California, though votes were eagerly sought by Democrats in the great Central and Sacramento Valleys. The campaign rhetoric of Gov. Edmund G. Brown, Jr. dealt with tax cuts, pledges to reduce the functions and the cost of government, along with rosy prospects for increasing grower wealth in broader markets for California's farm output.

Issues that once distinguished Democrats from Republicans, or at least liberals from conservatives, and rallied voters to recognizable and traditional positions, simply vanished in this year of Jarvis-Gann. Never did one hear discussion of welfare, of plans for improvement of mental hospitals, of prison reform, of improved and more accessible higher education, of public or private health costs, of Mexican immigrants and their problems of adaptation to the California culture. To be sure, elementary education was touched upon, but entirely in terms of money. Political concern today is with the problems of the middle class, caught between taxes and inflation.

It is appropriate, in an issue devoted to Carey McWilliams, to look at the present condition and recent experiences of the state in which he first became known as a social activist and political writer. McWilliams left California a quarter-century ago, but the volumes of *The Nation* under his editorship are evidence that he never lost contact with the state that rang for years with his challenges to established power, selfish advantage and prejudice. The question now is whether California has lost contact with the ideals of one of its most celebrated adopted sons. It cannot be answered easily, for values have shifted and priorities have changed. Perhaps the best way to approach it is to compare and contrast the political actions of the two Edmund G. Browns, father and son, who have served as Governors of California in periods roughly twenty years apart.

The contemporary Governor Brown, Edmund, Jr.—known universally as "Jerry," to distinguish him from Brown, Sr., known universally as "Pat"—is a canny student of his own times. His re-election was the first he won entirely on his own, not on the strength of his father's name, and it was a stunning victory. It was also remarkable for the turnabout it illustrates in political values. In that state where the public clamor for tax cuts and diminished government was so explosively born, the middle-class revolt culminates in Brown's election to a second term. He won with a pledge to make the spirit of Proposition 13 work. He won because voters, including Republicans, including businessmen who gave generously to his campaign, believed his Democratic administration would prune government more effectively than would an administration under his Republican opponent.

This reliance on a Democrat by people who belong traditionally in the GOP marks a totally new political climate. What is involved is not merely hope for lighter taxes but a disillusionment with government, a distrust of government as a problem solver.

Every time has its own imperatives, and Governors more often ride them than direct them. My brief review of the two Governors Brown is not intended as an indulgence in nostalgia nor ventured upon for invidious comparison. The social context in which each was called to function was fixed by national, not parochial, events and mood. Differences between them are not, as is sometimes claimed, just due to a generational shift in viewpoint. A whole people, a nation, changed.

If disillusionment with the war in Vietnam and Watergate fostered some of the cynicism about government's effectiveness, certainly also the common belief that government had a cure for anything and everything, which characterized the years when the first Governor Brown served California, built up a burden beyond the system's will or capacity to carry.

The era of Pat Brown evolved out of the devastating and dehumanizing 1930s depression. It was the period of Dust Bowl refugees pouring into California, and hounded by the sheriffs who tried to drive them back across the border. It was the time of soup kitchens and cooperatives, of state relief and Upton Sinclair's call to Democrats to "End Poverty in California." The first massive federal public work that Franklin Roosevelt undertook was sited in California, the great Shasta Dam that provided low-cost public power as well as low-priced regulated water.

When Pat Brown was elected Governor he was only the second Democrat to hold that office in the century, Culbert Olson (1939-43) having been the first. Both men were carried into office by the momentum of depression-generated social concerns, the expectation that government must solve problems too great for other agencies. Between these two Democrats came Earl Warren, a Governor whom President Truman once saluted as "a Democrat in everything but name."

In the post-World War II period Eisenhower named Warren to be Chief Justice of the Supreme Court and Lieut. Gov. Goodwin Knight succeeded him. Pat Brown had won respect as district attorney of San Francisco, battling crime there with an integrity that astonished the community unaccustomed to such valor. As Attorney General, he had fought organized crime in the state and deflected the redbaiting and anti-labor alarms, raised purposely to fuel hatreds between labor and business.

When Republicans of California decided to draw their party lines more sharply to the Right and, under the banner of a "right-to-work" initiative, to buck organized labor, Brown was the logical Democrat to stop this shift. His appeal to the middle class of that period as a moderate man was as powerful as is Jerry Brown's appeal today. But the middle class has changed its expectations.

Pat Brown is a man of readily aroused sympathies, quick to respond to need. He was an identifiable "lib-

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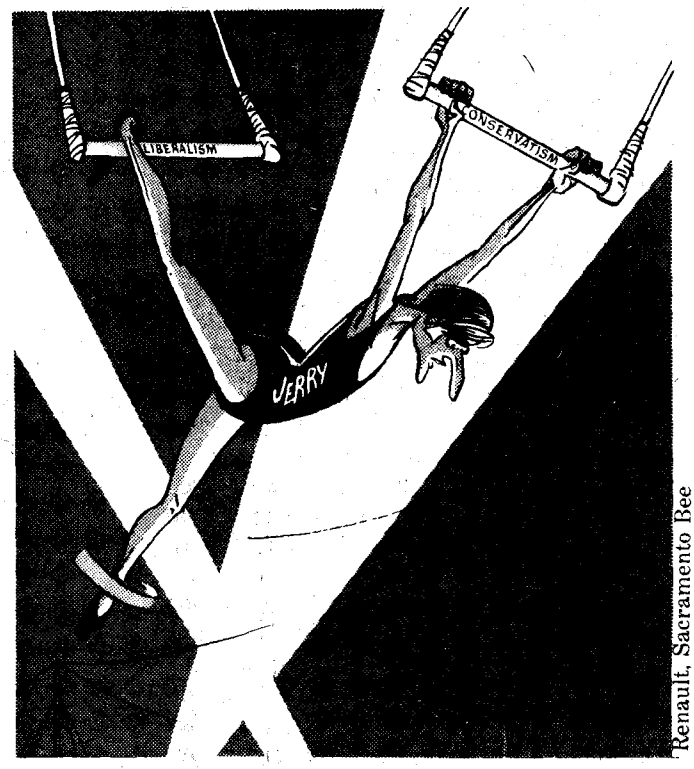
eral" early, but no policy so clearly placed him as champion of the underdog as his concern for justice to the small farmer. As Attorney General he reversed California's GOP-contrived position on the famous Ivanhoe Irrigation District case, and won before the U.S. Supreme Court assurance that small farmers would get a promised fair deal under federal law. The case ran against large growers who were using water in excess of the law's limitation of 160 acres. In a sequel to this position a series of other court rulings that have come down are likely to culminate in action by the next Congress. They confront the erosion of small farmers' rights in California and the demise of the family farm.

Liberal causes move slowly. When Pat Brown was Governor he appointed a commission to study insanity and the criminal offender. It recommended, among other points, abandoning the old M'Naghten rule, the test of responsibility for criminal conduct based on the accused's ability to distinguish right from wrong. It advocated instead the Model Penal Code approach which looks to the ability of the accused, when affected by mental disease, to appreciate criminality and control his conduct. Brown's consultants thought this far too advanced for acceptance, but the commission's report has been a resource for the courts ever since and only a few months ago the state Supreme Court, which Jerry Brown has termed "his" court, ruled that the M'Naghten rule is no longer an acceptable test for insanity in a criminal case. If this example suggests how long the span usually is for government reform, it also illustrates the wide scope of interests and reform moves that Gov. Pat Brown spurred during two very active terms in office.

The problems, however, persist. The first Governor in California to try modernizing mental-health care was the Democratic innovator, Olson. Governor Warren saw the need and followed up with further improvements, as did Gov. Pat Brown. Mental health had become a recognized political issue demanding attention. This priority continued during the Reagan administration, but took the form of cutting back state hospitals and returning patients to their familiar communities. The sequestered hospital approach was out of style. Unfortunately this move was hurried along for money-saving reasons and communities were little prepared for the new arrivals.

Public sensitivity to mental health greatly increased amid the jarring social dislocations of the past fifteen years. Yet this area of state responsibility has been almost ignored by Gov. Jerry Brown, who cut department budgets and refused funds to improve mental hospitals until tragedies showed the need to be desperate.

Prisons are in much the same situation. The "tough-on-crime" attitude, supported in almost every speech by Gov. Jerry Brown, has made prison mandatory for an ever wider range of offenses. In the past nine months more convicts have been crowded into California prisons than ever before in a like period. Their future looks bleak in a budget-trimming state. Brown's supporters say he has favored building more prisons, but the only voices calling for fewer prisoners are



Renault, Sacramento Bee

church groups.

It is typical of his style, one so different from traditional liberal postures, that Jerry Brown insists prisons exist for punishment, not rehabilitation. In frank revulsion against earlier approaches to social problems he labels (or libels) them as "trying to solve problems by throwing money at them."

The death penalty is an issue that places the administrations of the two Browns in particularly sharp contrast. The first public revulsion against it erupted during the Pat Brown regime in the case of Caryl Chessman, who was ordered to die for a brutal rape-kidnapping that did not involve murder. The severity of the penalty and Chessman's success in staving off execution for more than a decade made him notorious around the world. His crime would not exact so severe a penalty today in California and even his kidnapping would not be classified as such; the law has caught up with his case. The elder Brown agonized over Chessman, his decision being made no easier by the plea of his son Jerry, then a Jesuit seminarian, that the execution be stayed. Ultimately, the Governor let Chessman die, and though the world had been made well aware of his distaste for killing a human being in the name of justice, his political decline was attributed in large part to this event.

Since then such veterans of the liberal vanguard as the Quakers, the ACLU and the NAACP Legal Fund have checked society's ruthless employment of the death penalty, mostly through the courts under Anthony Amsterdam's brilliant and tenacious legal chess game. But the public has not been won over; in fact, a growing fear of crime and violence has pushed popular sentiment even further toward advocacy of the death penalty.

In the November election California voted 75 to 25 to extend it. In addition, voters chose as their Attorney

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General George Deukmejian, the man who pushed hard in the legislature to reinstitute capital punishment after the California Supreme Court had ruled it "impermissibly cruel." Deukmejian wrote the new death penalty law and campaigned on it.

Gov. Jerry Brown has been cautiously silent on this highly charged issue; he wants no repetition of the public disdain his father suffered. He stated briefly to the legislature his personal disapproval of capital punishment and he vetoed the Deukmejian measure. Then, when votes were being rounded up to override that veto, he made no apparent intervention and he did not urge his view on the public. Gov. Pat Brown was wont to air his anxieties and worries before the public, fretting especially over questions of justice where human suffering was involved. Gov. Jerry Brown is not one to risk loss of popularity for what is on its face a hopeless cause. Nor is he given to communicating his concerns to the public. He operates in a reserved, obscure and private style, not finding it necessary to explain his moves.

Both Browns owed their first terms conspicuously to organized labor. Pat Brown cemented the alliance when in 1958 he beat U.S. Sen. William Knowland on the "right-to-work" issue. But he was never any bloc's captive; he was too open, too widely and actively responsive for that.

When Jerry Brown ran, after two terms of Ronald Reagan Republicanism, he had two obvious assets, and a third that was not at first recognized. The first two were inherited: his name and the loyalty of labor. Various AFL-CIO unions funded and inspirited his 1974 campaign and brought him a slim victory. Labor is less fond of him now, after his budget retrenchment froze wages for all public employees, state as well as local, despite many union contracts calling for raises.

The third asset that aided Jerry Brown in his first race and has spectacularly propelled him into his second term is an intuitive gift for reading and responding to the public mind. If Pat Brown was schooled in political sensitivity by the depression and World War II, Jerry Brown was conditioned by the militancy of the young for social justice, and by the powerful disillusionment of the war in Vietnam and Watergate. He was formed largely in the context of Reagan's eight years when the popular whipping boys were a complex of liberal causes—welfare, publicly supported medical care for the poor, the 160-acre limitation for federally developed agricultural water, unemployment among urban blacks, free university education, the Mexican farmhand and particularly the new champions of agricultural labor, the California Rural Legal Assistance, most notably successful of the poverty-law teams in that period.

All of these Reagan venomously attacked. When he won a second time in 1970 against the ill-fated attempt by Jess Unruh to bring the Democrats back after the death of Robert Kennedy and the 1968 convention disasters, the press remarked how much the Reagan campaign dwelt on fear and hate. His remarks then can still shock today. Welfare, said Reagan, subsidized "the nonproducers at the expense of the producers." When he assured farmers that campus protesters must not be appeased, he said, "If it takes a blood bath, let it be now." He said later he didn't quite mean that, but people applauded his "honesty." Reagan targeted child-care centers, home-nursing services, "the professors" and the state universities as a whole, federal government's bigness and the constantly expanding role of state government. It is noteworthy that these are the institutions Gov. Jerry Brown has criticized derisively or deprived of funds. He came into office, after all, when such attitudes were widely accepted. Richard Rodda, in 1970 political editor of the *Sacramento Bee*, noted that the successful candidates "touch the nerves that light up greed, indignation, prejudice and contempt." "Crime in the streets" was the political slogan of the day. It has been reshaped this year as "tough on crime."

Violence made its first major political appearance near the end of Pat Brown's term. Unrest among the young was widespread by then but one bleak area of Los Angeles, Watts, erupted into the most fearful burning, looting and rioting of any black protest in the nation. The response was, if not totally ameliorating, at least positive. For instance, in one year Brown poured the entire state entitlement of Hill Burton hospital construction money into Watts, to give that area a needed health center. Transportation deficiencies were met with new bus lines. Governor Brown opened at Watts a government center where welfare, unemployment insurance, job training and similar services were concentrated.

Today the black communities of California are well served by their own political leadership, most of it schooled through opportunities that opened up in the elder Brown's administration. It wasn't only that he brought black talent into his own staff in the person of Cecil Poole, who later became U.S. Attorney in San Francisco and is now a federal judge there; he systematically supported the emerging minority leadership that is now prominent in the California legislature and courts and in such municipal governments as Los Angeles and Oakland.

When Jerry Brown's turn came, he particularly favored the neglected Latino. His effective championship of a labor relations law for agriculture rewarded the long crusade of Cesar Chavez and is still the most notable achievement of his first term. But Jerry Brown's recent campaign also made a conscious drive to find and encourage political leadership among the Spanish-speaking. It served his own needs to bring them to the polls, of course, but it was also a deliberate attempt to push this group into the political process. Governor Brown is well aware that in a few years those whom California now terms minorities will be the majority. He has not, by any means, neglected blacks though he did not start early enough to help the two black party colleagues seeking election as Lieutenant Governor and Attorney General. He has kept money for Los Angeles' school busing for integration.

The present Governor Brown's reluctance to champion causes and exhort the public, or indeed to communicate with the public at all except in TV-tailored catchwords, is sometimes condemned as self-serving. His supporters see it as a wise, if calculated, way to re-

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tain power for the long-term achievement of goals that will serve the underdogs of society better in the future. The style, but not the priorities, have changed, his friends say. And certainly his speeches through the last campaign were peppered with references to the poor, to "compassion" and "the human element." It remains to be seen how they are served next year. This year, Brown denied public employees and those on relief even a 2% cost-of-living increase.

Whatever disappointments activists may have about Jerry Brown, no one can call him a dilettante. He has worked hard at learning to govern. This schooling, together with proof that he has enormous public support, sets up promise for the coming year. The demand for stringent cost cutting is clear. There will be economies, though surplus funds are sure to carry the state rather comfortably as far as 1980. Despite inflation, California's economy looks robust for the immediate future. The chance is at hand to pare away outmoded or unnecessary services and to fashion a more efficient government attuned to a progressive future. The challenge will be to achieve economy without penalizing the poor. So far, that is where the burden of reduced spending has hit.

Old problems that concern not business but human beings—mental hospitals, prisons, public health, child care, and education at the elementary and at advanced levels—await state action. New problems are emerging: tenant-landlord relations, housing needs, underground water regulation and land-use planning. Countless social agencies devoted to the ill, the distraught, drug users, runaway teen-agers, battered wives, illiterate immigrants, the suicide-prone and other such problems have been crippled this year by a reduction in state funds. There is an opportunity to insure humane priorities as the state government is reshaped to a more cost-conscious mold, but the fear is that Governor Brown will be so preoccupied with creating a national image as the champion of frugal government that California's institutions will suffer.

Quite as significant as Brown on the California scene today is the Democratic legislative leadership. Arrayed with Assembly Speaker Leo McCarthy of San Francisco is a handful of young, vigorous and intelligent lawmakers who emerged from the Vietnam War Protest Movement. Among them notably are Assemblyman Howard Berman of Beverly Hills, former president of the Young Democrats, Willie Brown and Art Agnos of San Francisco. Not quite as strong in the legislature as they would like to be, having just lost seven seats to Republicans, this group nevertheless has a majority and already has shown its determination to be positive rather than negative or neutral toward social questions.

The initiative on policy is likely to emerge from these legislators rather than from the Governor. McCarthy is obviously bent on building a reputation for himself as a party leader. It was, in fact, the legislature rather than Governor Brown that shaped California's response to Proposition 13 and the disposal of state surpluses.

What Governor Brown will do in this context is not predictable. Teamed with the legislature, he could create a model for efficient and "human" government, as he likes to call it. On the other hand he may be out of the state much of the time, appearing on the national stage to press his bid for the Presidency.

But in California, despite taxpayer expectations of frugality that cannot be ignored, the Democratic leadership in the legislature has positive goals. It would be a cause for celebration if the term Democrat this year came to symbolize what "liberal" or "activist" used to connote, what Carey McWilliams fought to instill in the state of California. □

McCarthy's Hoax

(Continued from Front Cover)

the form of criminal prosecutions under state statutes that made it unlawful to teach or advocate the violent overthrow of the government or to join organizations holding such beliefs. A series of Supreme Court decisions in the 1930s, and a changing political climate, had almost halted such prosecutions by World War II. Except for the racially motivated exclusion of Japanese-Americans from the West Coast at the start of the war, there was remarkably little political repression during World War II, probably because such repression has generally been directed at the political Left and Russia was our ally.

The post-World War II period was unlike anything in our past. Whatever one's view of the origins of the cold war, its existence not only revived the latent American fear of communism but placed it in a global setting. Whether the Soviet danger was real, imagined or both, the perception was real. Czechoslovakia, Berlin, China, the loss of our atomic monopoly, the arrest of Soviet spies in Canada—all coming shortly after a war that had been guaranteed to assure American security—created the ideal climate for fear, hate, repression and political demagoguery.

Some of the engines of repression were already in place, among them the House Committee on Un-American Activities. Others—such as President Truman's loyalty program, created in March 1947—may well have been started as good-faith attempts to reconcile the perceived interests of national security with the rights of government employees. But the loyalty program shook loose an avalanche of federal, state and local legislation, investigations, blacklists and oaths of allegiance that extended across the whole spectrum of government—career diplomats, atomic scientists, teachers, subway conductors—and to all aspects of our cultural and political life, including the professions, universities, the arts, business, communications. No significant activity was immune from the virulent disease of anti-Communist political orthodoxy.

This national hysteria—and the massive apparatus it generated—was based on an assumption that too few people dared to question. It was alleged that the United States was threatened by an internal menace that

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In tribute to Carey McWilliams
for his courage, his wisdom,
and his continuously insightful
political commentary.

BETTY & STANLEY SHEINBAUM

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was part of a worldwide Communist conspiracy led by the Soviet Union and covertly supported in this country by hundreds of thousands, perhaps millions, of sympathizers who were penetrating all phases of American public and private life, seeking the ultimate overthrow of our government and its replacement by a Communist dictatorship.

Historians are still debating the extent of the external threat. But the internal threat was a hoax, and Carey McWilliams was one of the few writers to label it as such, early and often. That was a central message of his book, *Witch Hunt* (1950), and it continued to be a theme of his articles and *The Nation*'s editorials throughout the period. In a brilliant series of editorials entitled "The Present Danger," published in June 1953, the editors wrote, "On a world scale communism is unmistakably a threatening reality; McCarthy's 'menace of American communism' is a hoax."

Unfortunately, almost every segment of the American political spectrum, including most liberals, allowed itself to fight the battle on McCarthy's ground. They all accepted the proposition that communism was a dangerous disease and then sought to argue that McCarthy's methods to combat it were wrong, or that given individuals did not in fact have it. Carey McWilliams was a watchman in the night shouting out that there was a different danger, a real danger, that our most precious liberties were being eroded. He recognized that one did not need loyalty programs, Congressional inquisitions, and a gigantic investigative apparatus to deal with persons whose backgrounds raised serious questions about their ability to perform their particular job. McCarthyism had nothing to do with job qualifications or security; it was aimed at political expression, belief, association, inquiry and assembly. It used all the instruments of public and private power, including the threats of loss of livelihood and imprisonment, to punish people for the exercise of those constitutionally protected rights.

Since the entire structure was based on fear, rather than fact, the charlatans quickly took over. If no cases of espionage were discovered by various loyalty programs, or if no one had established that teachers or script writers or foundation executives or editors were using their positions to undermine American democracy, then it must be because the investigators were also tainted, and only a McCarthy, Jenner or Velde could save the country.

Reading the pages of *The Nation*, starting in the late 1940s and culminating with the censure of McCarthy in late 1954, one is struck by the intensity and clarity of thought that Carey McWilliams and his colleagues brought to the issue of McCarthyism. It is important to note first what *The Nation* did not advocate. It did not urge liberal organizations to purge themselves of Communists so that they could function more effectively in the McCarthy era. It did not look into the political backgrounds of its contributing writers. It did not follow the lead of some liberals who, like Senator Humphrey, thought that the way to deal with McCarthyism was to outdo the Right by urging even stronger measures against communism, such as outlawing the Communist Party. It rejected the concept, which many liberals seriously proposed, that free expression could be advanced by having organizations disclose fully the sources of their funds, thereby proving that liberals were not financed by Moscow. And *The Nation* refused steadfastly to blame the extreme Left for the resurgence of reaction in the postwar era, thereby parting company with many liberals who blamed their own discomfort more on the Communists than on McCarthy.

The Nation under Carey McWilliams was not the only voice raised to defend civil liberties in the McCarthy era, but no other publication could equal its intensity, consistency, eloquence and uncompromising clarity of reasoning on every major civil liberties issue. *The Nation* saw the First Amendment implications of the loyalty program, loyalty oaths, and investigations into Communist Party affiliations. Long before the courts established the principle that mere party membership could not be the basis for dismissing government employees, *The Nation* was arguing with those academic leaders, including President John Dickey of Dartmouth, who claimed that such membership proved the lack of intellectual integrity.

When the phrase "Fifth Amendment Communist" was on everyone's lips, Carey McWilliams encouraged Laurent Frantz and me to write "Does Silence Mean Guilt?" which appeared in the issue of June 6, 1953, and which may well have been the first attempt during that period to explain why a plea of the privilege against self-incrimination was consistent with innocence.

Carey McWilliams saw clearly the evil of registration laws. In an article entitled "The Registration of Heretics" (December 9, 1950) he wrote ". . .registration ordinances and loyalty affidavits represent a further attempt to extend the power of government to control thoughts and tendencies as well as such activities as 'teaching' and 'advocacy.' Thoughts are now regarded as more dangerous than acts precisely because they are harder to detect and more difficult to control. Registration statutes, seen in this perspective, are not merely current aberrations but logical extensions of devices used earlier. They are manifestations of a more or less constant tendency to suppress Socialist heresy." That same year Congress enacted, over the President's veto, the Subversive Activities Control Act of 1950, creating a registration procedure which would have achieved the suppression Carey McWilliams described if the Supreme Court had not invalidated most of its operative provisions in the 1960s.

Carey McWilliams brought to the civil liberties crisis of the 1950s his talents as a lawyer not only in his own writing but to encourage other lawyers to use the pages of *The Nation* to influence public opinon. A few academics—like Zechariah Chafee, Ralph Brown and Vern Countryman, among others—responded, but during this period the legal profession was generally on the wrong side. At the time, Carey and I often discussed constitutional and other legal issues. He welcomed my offer to subject the Elizabeth Bentley story and the report of the Jenner Senate Subcommittee on

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Internal Security, which were hailed in 1953 as "proof" that a spy ring existed, to a lawyer's analysis of sufficiency of the evidence. The "evidence" in both instances turned out to be one person's, Elizabeth Bentley's uncorroborated story.

The lawyer in Carey McWilliams also emerged in his masterful dissection of the report of a special security board of the Atomic Energy Commission which, in 1954, concluded that Dr. J. Robert Oppenheimer was a loyal citizen but a bad security risk. His analysis had an importance beyond the Oppenheimer case because he took sharp issue with the widely accepted notion that the loyalty program could be made fair if its procedures were improved. "Defective as we believe the board's procedures to have been," he wrote, ". . .its conclusions would still be indefensible if it had followed perfect procedures. The present security system flouts the spirit and the genius of American democracy. . . .Guilt is premised on association and history is freely rewritten to pin a red tag on lawful organizations of former decades. What this system does is to raise a presumption of guilt against an entire people." No amount of procedural due process could save such a system.

As the McCarthy era progressed Carey McWilliams saw that the country faced an unprecedented domestic threat to our liberties. "Like sleepwalkers stumbling toward a precipice," an editorial warned in June 1953, "the American people are moving toward a hazard which many sense but few can clearly see." *The Nation* recognized, earlier than most, that something more was involved—an attempt by McCarthy and his allies to seize political power. The magazine was defending the Eisenhower Presidency when the President himself refused to do so. Although most of *The Nation*'s readers were probably liberal Democrats, McCarthyism was never treated as a partisan issue. The constant appeal was for a bipartisan effort. "Because his [McCarthy's] appeal is bipartisan, only a bipartisan opposition stands much chance of being effective." And, every so often, while fearing the worst and exhorting people to act, the magazine sounded a hopeful note: in an editorial drawing upon Lincoln's First Inaugural, it said, "The mystic chords of memory can yet swell to the chorus of the union if they are touched again, as surely they will be, by the better angels of our nature."

By 1954 the McCarthy tide began to recede as the centers of political power, now in Republican hands, belatedly stirred themselves to self-defense. A gradual easing of international tensions permitted the American people a clearer perspective on the alleged internal Communist conspiracy. The addition of Chief Justice Warren and Justice Brennan to the Supreme Court produced modifications in some of the more disastrous decisions of the Vinson era, although it was not until the 1960s that some of the worst of the damage was undone.

There are important lessons to be learned from the record of Carey McWilliams and *The Nation* during this period. Perhaps the most important is the absolute necessity of fighting for civil liberties in the political arena and not relying exclusively on the courts. The record of the Supreme Court in periods of real or perceived foreign threats gives little reason to hope that the judiciary can preserve political freedoms when the country feels itself endangered. The Espionage Act cases after World War I, the Japanese-American exclusion cases in World War II, and the record of the Supreme Court during most of the post-World War II era should give little comfort to civil libertarians.

Ben Shahn; from *The Nation* Aug. 30, 1952

Sen. Joseph McCarthy

Carey McWilliams realized that public opinion and the political process, as well as the courts, had to be touched ". . . by the better angels of our nature." The libertarian heritage of the Warren Court has left the cause of civil liberties politically flabby. Issues like abortion, capital punishment and rights of criminal defendants were taken over by the courts in the 1960s, and the civil libertarians naively believed that victories could be permanently won there. Each generation of Americans must learn what Carey McWilliams instinctively knew as he waged the civil liberties struggle nearly thirty years ago—that, important as the judicial system may be in preserving freedom, the judges remain partners with the people in this unending effort. We may condemn the judges for responding to popular pressures, but we would be foolhardy to forget that they do.

These years in Carey McWilliams's career should also give us some useful perspectives. One may disagree with the trend of the Burger Court, for example, but it is foolish rhetoric to equate the civil liberties record of this Court with that of the pre-Warren era. We do not live in a period of repression although, if the past is prologue, it will happen again. The pages of *The Nation* during the McCarthy era have the ring of passion and of truth because Carey McWilliams could always distinguish between what was important and what was essential. Because he fought so effectively for both, each in its own way, Carey McWilliams made an enduring contribution to the history of freedom in America. □

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BOOKS & THE ARTS.

America Between Covers

CHRISTOPHER LASCH

In the space of twenty-one years—from 1929 to 1950—Carey McWilliams published no less than eleven important books. In the 1940s, hardly a year passed without the appearance of a new work from this indefatigable author. On the assumption that many readers of *The Nation* remain unaware of the extent and variety of his output, I list the titles in order of their appearance.

Ambrose Bierce: A Biography (1929)
Louis Adamic and Shadow-America (1935)
Factories in the Field: The Story of Migratory Farm Labor in California (1939)
Ill Fares the Land: Migrants and Migratory Labor in the United States (1942)
Brothers Under the Skin (1943)
Prejudice: Japanese-Americans, Symbol of Racial Intolerance (1944)
Southern California Country: An Island on the Land (1946)
A Mask for Privilege: Anti-Semitism in America (1948)
North from Mexico: The Spanish-Speaking People of the United States (1949)
California: The Great Exception (1949)
Witch Hunt: The Revival of Heresy (1950)

These books—all except the last of them—fall into three categories: literary studies (*Bierce, Adamic*); studies of regionalism and regional cultures (*Southern California Country; North from Mexico; California*); and studies of minority groups and race relations (*Factories in the Field; Ill Fares the Land; Brothers Under the Skin; Prejudice; A Mask for Privilege*).

Those familiar with McWilliams's later works and with his long career as editor of *The Nation* may be surprised to know that he began his literary career not as a radical and social critic but as something of an aesthete and iconoclast. On his own testimony an "avid fan" of H.L. Mencken, a "devoted reader" of *The Smart Set*, and a friend of the San Francisco poet George Sterling, McWilliams in the 1920s and early 1930s had more in common with the Bohemian Club of San Francisco than with the John Reed Club, more interest in the alienation of the artist than in the exploitation of the masses. The first installment of his biography of Ambrose Bierce, begun while McWilliams was still an undergraduate at the University of Southern California, appeared in Mencken's *American Mercury* in 1929. McWilliams had been drawn to Bierce in the first place, in part, because Mencken had praised him as a fellow-spirit, a bold iconoclast and debunker. McWilliams feared that Bierce's fiction—much of it "commonplace" and some of it "actually unreadable today"—had obscured his "great talent as a wit and satirist." He admired Bierce's irreverence, his independence, his scorn for second-rate thinking and easy answers, and his hatred of the political dogmas of Right and Left alike. He believed that Bierce, for all his "stoical indifference" and his doctrine that "nothing matters," felt "more compassion for the weak and defenseless" than muckrakers and literary socialists like John Spargo, Max Eastman, Floyd Dell, Ida Tarbell and John Hunter, all of whom had later retreated from their radicalism. McWilliams thought Bierce had clearly got the better of Hunter and Morris Hillquit in a 1906 debate about socialism, during which Bierce declared: "I don't believe in the greatest good to the greatest number—it seems to me perfect rot. I believe in the greatest good to the best men. And I would sacrifice a thousand incapable men to elevate one really great man." Bierce may have been "rather stupid about his arguments" in McWilliams's view, but he was right to reject his opponents' calm assumption that the "answers to life's riddles were very simple, and that everyone was absurd who did not agree with their panacea."

By the time he had finished his biography of Bierce, McWilliams confessed that his own "early enthusiasm for his work had somewhat waned." His next book, a tribute to the radical journalist Louis Adamic, dealt with a writer more engaged with social issues than Bierce, more sensitive to social injustice, yet no less impatient with the received wisdom of any political party or faction. McWilliams himself was moving to the Left at this time, having found that "when one encounters actual Communists, working in the field, so to speak, one has to revise numerous preconceived notions about Communists in general." He felt it necessary to take issue with a writer in *The New Masses* who had attacked Adamic's "middle-class point of view." Yet Adamic interested McWilliams not principally as a radical "instinctively hostile to typically middle-class concepts" but as a writer who, because of his Slovenian origin, had experienced American life with the force of an original discovery.

Christopher Lasch's most recent book is Haven in a Heartless World: The Family Besieged *(Basic Books).*

THE EYE

My bad grandfather wouldn't feed us.
He turned the lights out when we tried to read.
He sat alone in the dark room
in front of the fire, and drank. He died
when I was seven, and Grandma had never once
taken anyone's side against him,
the firelight on his red cold face
glittering extra on his glass eye.

Today I thought about that glass eye,
and how at night in the big double bed
he slept facing his wife, the limp
hole, where his eye had been, open
toward her on the pillow, and how I am
one-fourth him, a brutal man with a
hole for an eye, and one-fourth her,
a woman who protected no one. I am their
sex, too, their son, their bed, and
under their bed the trap-door down to the
cellar, with its barrels of fresh apples, and
somewhere in me too is the path
down to the creek gleaming in the dark, a
way out of there.

Sharon Olds

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> The natives [McWilliams wrote] are the least American of the Americans. They acquiesce good-naturedly . . . in the platitudes of American democracy. . . . They never stare with bewildered incredulity at the sharp discrepancy between precept and practice, between the Declaration of Independence and the Liberty League, between the politics of Thomas Jefferson and the daintily eclectic fascism of Mr. Roosevelt [!]. Nor, when they come of age intellectually, do they get a compelling sense of these discrepancies. The earlier platitudes turn into cynicisms . . . .

Only an outsider could grasp the contradictory quality of American life without becoming a cynic; only an outsider, or an American looking at his country with the eyes of an outsider, could really "see America." Even a writer as independent as Waldo Frank could not quite grasp the totality of American life; his *Rediscovery of America*, McWilliams thought, was a "groping and agonized document" that illustrated "both the difficulty and objection to forming a synthetic conception of present-day America."

The references to Frank and to America's "coming of age" reveal McWilliams's debt to Van Wyck Brooks and the brilliant group of intellectuals associated in the 'teens with *Seven Arts* and *The Dial*, a group that also included Randolph Bourne, Paul Rosenfeld and Lewis Mumford. These critics had called on American intellectuals to rediscover their own country and to create a "usable past"; they too had insisted that Europeans often saw more deeply into American culture and took it more seriously than genteel critics who never tired of apologizing for America's immaturity and lack of antiquities. Bourne's plea for cultural pluralism—for a "trans-national" America that would incorporate without homogenizing the immigrant cultures most intellectuals were so eager to repudiate—best expressed the program of this school. But by the 1920s the need to rediscover America was so widely experienced that it could no longer be identified with the program of any particular group. It expressed itself in Gilbert Seldes's writings on popular culture, in Constance Rourke's study of American humor, even in the work of literary mavericks like Mencken and Thomas Beer. Mencken's study of the American language originated in the same impulse. Beer's book *The Mauve Decade* contains a chapter condemning American anti-catholicism ("a society which mistook amenity for civilization naturally had a low role for this untidy intrusion of people who spoke English and supposedly danced jigs") and calling for a realistic literature of Irish-American life.

In the '30s, popularization of the anthropological concept of culture, as Warren Susman has shown, gave added impetus to the search for the neglected cultural traditions of American minorities. Cultural anthropology, moreover, destroyed "scientific" racism and promoted cultural relativism. Its findings and their implications were later popularized by McWilliams himself in *A Mask for Privilege* and other books.

All these currents—the search for a literary counterweight to the genteel tradition; the growing conviction that "culture" included not merely literature but folkways; the collapse of theoretical racism and the new respect for cultural differences—converged in the late '30s in a literature devoted to the description and evocation of the American past, the American scene, American regionalism, the life of the common people, the experience of racial and ethnic minorities. Expressing itself most characteristically in the documentary form, this writing sought not only to uncover the popular roots of American culture but to win sympathy for groups whose contributions had been not only ignored but actively rejected.

McWilliams's later works—both the regional studies and the books on

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minorities—seem clearly to have grown out of this "trans-national" movement in American writing. Yet in exchanging the political agnosticism of Bierce and Mencken for a passionate commitment to equal rights, McWilliams did not repudiate his earlier work, any more than the intellectuals of the '30s as a whole, in denouncing the "irresponsibility" of the uncommitted intellectuals of the '20s, rejected that period's deeper preoccupations. Rather, those intellectuals seem to have come to the view that the only escape both from the genteel tradition, and from the cynicism it called up among independent spirits in reaction, lay not in a carefully cultivated iconoclasm but in an imaginative identification with the underclass. In *The Mauve Decade* Beer, noting the gradual decline of religious skepticism during the last decades of the 19th century—the eclipse of the village atheist and the "profane lawyer"—observed that by the end of the century, children might hear religious discussion," might escape the genteel sentimentality of middle-class Protestantism, only "if they went idling in the haunts of the vulgar and displaced."

> There were cool, gloomy academies of sophisticated discourse up any alley in those days, deep livery stables where the voices of Negro hostlers mixed an oily languor with the harsh drawl of grooms as harness was polished on sunny afternoons; the adolescent of the succeeding time has found freedom in smells of gasoline and wayward gin; in the '90's freedom was perfumed with saddlesoap and leather, with rotted straw and dung.

The discovery of America's racial minorities in the '30s, already anticipated in the progressive period in the writings of Bourne, Hutchins Hapgood and Horace Kallen, reflected the intellectuals' continuing search for an alternative to "middle-class concepts," for the smell and feel of freedom. "The charm of the Spanish-speaking people," McWilliams wrote in *North from Mexico*, "... is that they have not been molded by modern industrialism."

The logic of pluralism demanded not only an appreciation of minority cultures but, increasingly, a vigorous defense of their interests against a rising tide of intolerance. The growth of anti-Semitic movements led by Father Coughlin and other demagogues; the internment of Japanese-Americans during World War II; and the race riots that flared up in many American cities in 1943 convinced McWilliams that intolerance had survived the collapse of scientific racism and that, indeed, capitalism's growing dependence on a pool of degraded and pauperized labor gave new bitterness to class and ethnic con-

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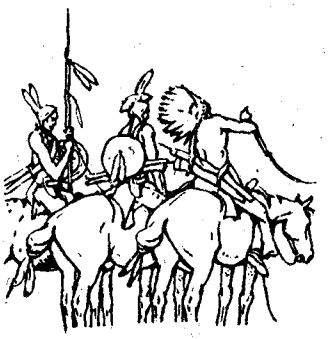

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flict. Discrimination, after all, originated not in prejudice or pathology but in the struggle for power among groups competing on unequal terms. "Race relations are not based on prejudice; prejudice is a by-product of race relations .... Psychological theories of prejudice, offered as theories of race relations, ... do not explain the strategies by which certain groups maintain their dominance over other groups."

Since racial tensions arose not from the "individual problem of prejudice" but from the "social problem of discrimination," "educational" reforms, in McWilliams's view, could play little part in their resolution. By 1943, he was convinced of the need for a federal program designed to end every form of racial discrimination and to enforce fair racial practices. "The case for federal intervention is unanswerable." In his books of the early '40s, McWilliams raised issues that later gave rise to the civil rights movement, the issues around which the political conflicts of the '50s and '60s took shape. He was arguing, in effect, that racial discrimination had become the central issue of American politics. Subsequent events—Truman's civil rights program of 1948, put forward in the teeth of the Dixiecrat revolt; the integration of the armed forces during the Korean War; *Brown* v. *Board of Education;* the voter registration drive under Kennedy; the riots of the '60s and the rise of militant minority movements—bore out the accuracy of this assessment.

In demanding a sweeping federal commitment to racial equality, McWilliams did not advocate an assimilationist solution of the minority problem. Black power critics of the civil rights movement in the '60s confused the issue by equating integration with assimilation, and it is important, therefore, to repeat that the movement grew in part out of an earlier tradition of pluralist thought which, even when it succumbed to the temptation to sentimentalize the poor (McWilliams's own works are happily free of this tendency) never envisioned Americanization as the answer to poverty and racial discrimination.

Nor did a commitment to federal action imply a paternalistic strategy in which a "government-oriented class," as Daniel Patrick Moynihan has recently argued, used a "frustration-aggression" theory of human behavior to assert its own control over social policy, to substitute a therapeutic ethic for a utilitarian ethic, and to impose administered solutions on people deemed incapable of managing their own affairs. Moynihan correctly identifies paternalism as the central thread of recent social policy, but the civil rights movement, at least at the outset, never conceived of federal action as more than the precondition of a more aggressive policy of self-defense conducted by the victims of discrimination themselves.

It is the debased form of pluralism current today, not the civil rights movement, that should be blamed for encouraging the tendency toward paternalistic social policy—the pseudo-pluralism that encourages every minority, even the "gay" and "gray" lobbies, to defend its own parochial interests instead of mounting a general campaign against poverty and racial discrimination.

In the revised edition of *Brothers Under the Skin*, McWilliams offered a telling critique of the very concept of "civil rights," which, if it had been taken seriously, would have made it clear that the race problem is a civil *liberties* issue and that its only solution lies in popular action rather than governmentally imposed administrative reforms.

> Since 1947 ... "civil rights" has come to mean those civil liberties which a benevolent government grants, more or less as a favor, to racial minorities, while "civil liberties" proper relate to those rights which individuals must assert against government. With subtle but unmistakable emphasis, Negroes have been offered a bargain: civil rights for a repudiation of radical

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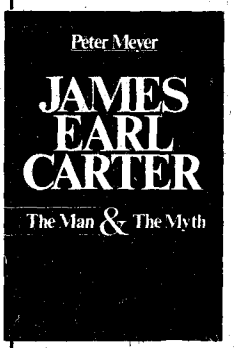

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protest. . . . Yet . . . civil rights do not guarantee full equality when the basis of inequality is to be found in unequal competitive power.

The renewal of "radical protest" in the '60s, followed quickly by its co-optation by the mystique of "Black is beautiful," has not altered the force of these words. They still describe, in a nutshell, both the promise of American pluralism and its repeated betrayal. □

FILMS

ROBERT HATCH

Ingmar Bergman's investigations over the past several years into grave psychiatric states is no doubt estimable from a socio-medical viewpoint, but I have two reservations about the cinematic results. The first of these is that each film tends to take the shape of a series of dialogues, sometimes even monologues, recited by eloquent speakers in well-appointed premises. Not only is the result rather static, given the capacity of film to cover ground, but also viewers who lack fluency in Swedish find themselves reading the screen as much as they watch it.

Second, the psychiatric difficulties that Mr. Bergman explores seem less the afflictions of particular men and women than instructive examples drawn from textbooks on this medical specialty. The characters, like children in a charade, represent the ingredients of a given complex—a process which, despite the generally very high level of acting, diminishes the stature of the contestants at the same time that it makes predictable the narrative of their hostilities.

So to *Autumn Sonata*. The adversaries here are Eva (Liv Ullmann), the intense, mystically inclined, overtly timid and insecure wife of a kind but recessively mild parochial pastor, and her mother (Ingrid Bergman), a renowned concert pianist of overpowering charm and innumerable lovers. They entirely dominate the screen, though the husband (Halvar Björk) smokes his pipe, offers comment in the manner of a chorus, and plays the suffering bystander at moments of emotional explosion. Upstairs lies another sister (Lena Nyman), paralyzed and virtually incapable of speech. She, I take it, suffers the physical equivalent of Eva's mental deformation.

The subject of the picture is love—its absence, its misapplication, the instances when it was not reciprocated, the times when it was misunderstood. Eva as a child had adored her beautiful mother, who, having never herself been loved, swallowed the guilt of abandoning her young and set her sights on glory. Now, years later, they are reunited and Eva, the repressed, the taken-for-granted Cinderella, blossoms into Nemesis and avenges the sufferings of her sister, her dead father and herself in an outpouring of cruelty as implacable as only the superbly tuned Ullmann could make it.

It is searing stuff, as the mother tries to defend herself with confessions and protests of innocence, and the daughter, drawing on a lifetime of stored grievances, presses home the indictment of ruined lives. Upstairs, the other sister writhes in an ecstasy of terror, falls from the bed and crawls across the floor like a broken snake. The analogy is powerful, if a little hard to parse.

The mother flees. Eva writes in remorse—all is not lost, she says; the supreme gift still left to us is the chance to help one another. She may well believe it—she is described as a woman who takes shelter in extrasensory communication—but I'm sorry the film ends that way. Neuroses that deep are not exorcised by a dust-up, however violent, and it is sentimental to suggest that they might be. And I'm sorry I cannot be

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more enthusiastic about a venture whose motivation I respect. Bergman is seeking for the truth within us, but he is a man of the theatre and might do better if he looked for it in dramatic action, and did not extrapolate it from the clinic.

It is long years since we could smile amiably at the imitative antics of the Japanese, solemnly reproducing the outward semblance of a Western technology they dimly understood, so the snicker went, to produce light bulbs that glowed like fireflies and ocean liners that capsized on launching. The Toyotas and Sonys have had the last laugh.

But those who regret the passing of white supremacy in the field of seductive gadgets, may find comfort in a film called *Message from Space*, directed by Kinji Fukasaku after a screenpla by Hiroo Matsuda. This is a compact, e onomy model of *Star Wars*, brougl to you with all the dazzling sights and rousing sounds of what used to be c lled a penny arcade. Lights blink in s ace, missiles whistle toward infinity in- trepid space bums exchange the pir- ited repartee of skit night at the Oddfellows Hall. There's a maid in distress, a planet to be saved (ours s it happens) and a parcel of extrate es- trial imperialists so foul of visage t I rejoiced in their defeat. A novelty g a c full-rigged ship that is presumably propelled by breezes of ions; otherwise the picture snuggles close to its Western big brother, even to the nerve-wracking chase at several times the speed of light through the twisting secret entrance to the villains' lair. Don't choke on your popcorn. ☐

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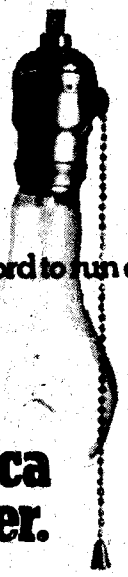

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